

PERSON DEIXIS USED IN *THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS* MOVIE

Jumat Barus

Institut Agama Islam Negeri Lhokseumawe, Lhokseumawe, Indonesia
E-mail: jumatbarus@iainlhokseumawe.ac.id

Received: 2023-11-20

Accepted: 2023-11-30

Published: 2023-12-29

Abstract

Deixis plays a crucial role in language by pointing or referring to specific people, places, or times. The study specifically focuses on personal deixis, which is essential for effective communication in daily conversations, as it helps avoiding misunderstandings regarding references made by the speaker. The objective of this study is to analyze the types of deixis present in the movie *The Pursuit of Happyness*. This research employs a descriptive qualitative analysis methodology. The collected data for analysis adheres to thematic analysis, a qualitative approach centered on recognizing, scrutinizing, and interpreting data. The findings of this research reveal numerous instances of deixis in the movie. Among the 898 instances of personal deixis identified, singular first-person deixis accounts for 180 occurrences, plural first-person deixis 107 instances, singular second-person deixis 375, singular third-person deixis 195, and plural third-person deixis 33. This study contributes to the understanding of deixis in movie discourse and provides insights into the pragmatic use of language in the movie. It enhances our knowledge of how deixis functions within a specific cinematic context and highlights the significance of personal deixis in shaping effective communication. The findings can be valuable for linguistic analysis, film studies, and contribute to the broader understanding of deixis in various forms of media.

Keywords: *deixis; person plural; person singular; pronoun*

1. Introduction

Deixis is a linguistic term that explains the relationship between language and context in which events occur in a particular language. The complete meaning of a language process can be easily understood if the underlying language conditions are known, such as who, where and when the language process takes place. If those are not known well, misunderstandings between the speaker and the hearer or the text and its reader may occur, or the meaning understood will be different from the actual meaning. This understanding is very dependent on the relationship between the word and its references or contexts. Context plays a vital role for human in comprehending the meaning behind language expressions. Therefore, in order to avoid confusion or misunderstanding when referring to subject or other elements within a context, it is important to familiarize oneself with deixis.

People would not realize the fact that they find deixis in their daily conversation. 'Deixis' is a technical term derived from the Greek word "pointing" through language (Yule, 1996:9). There are such markers that take certain components of their meaning from the

situation of the utterance in which it is employed to explore the speaker's message. According to Yule (1996: 9), these markers are known as deictic expressions and are also sometimes referred to as indexical expressions. The word "deictic expressions" refers to the relationship among geography, people, and time. Deictic does not derive from English; rather, it derives from the Greek term "deiknynai", which means "to show." They also have a similar connotation to "Deixis," which is used in pragmatics and linguistics to simply refer to a word. They also have a similar connotation to the term "Deixis," which is used in pragmatics and linguistics to refer to a word expression and a process that is understood to rely on the utterance context itself.

According to Levinson (1983), deixis is an essential topic of research in pragmatics, semantics, and linguistics since it reveals the link between reflected language and context. A deictic expression is a word or phrase that relates to the time, place, or circumstance in which a speaker is speaking (for example, this, that, these, those, now, then, here). Deixis is expressed in English using personal pronouns, demonstratives, adverbs, and tense. Deixis arises when contextual information is required to grasp the meaning of individual words and phrases in an utterance. Deictic words and phrases require context to provide meaning. According to Levinson (1983), contextual information is knowledge about the speaker, recipient, time, and place of an event.

Deixis can be divided into five major categories: person, spatial, temporal, discourse, and social deixis. Yule (1996) defines person deixis as a three-part division indicated by pronouns for first person (I), second person (you), and third person (he, she, it). In face-to-face contacts, the people to whom I and you refer are constantly changing as the interactants switch roles during the conversation. According to Levinson, spatial or place deixis refers to the specification of places relative to anchorage points in a speech event. The importance of locational specifications in general can be assessed by the fact that there appear to be two primary ways of referring to objects: describing or identifying them or locating them. The third type of deixis indicates temporal implications such as now and then. Temporal deixis is similar to all facets of deixis in that it makes final reference to participant-role. As a first approximation, it can be defined as "the time when the speaker produces the utterance containing now." Levinson states that discourse deixis focuses on the employment of terms inside a given speech to refer to some portion of the discourse that covers that utterance. A number of alternative ways in which an utterance indicates its relationship to a surrounding text can be included in this category. For example, utterance-initial appears to indicate that the utterance contains it and is addressed to one or more steps back rather than the immediately preceding discourse. He further explains that social deixis refers to the aspects of linguistic structure that incorporate participants' social identities, social affiliations, or the relationships between one of them and the persons or entities signified. There are other facets of language usage that include these relationships, but they are only applicable to the topic at hand if they are grammaticalized. Pronouns and titles of address are two examples (Levinson, 1983).

2. Literature Review

Deixis is crucial in conveying emotions and amplifying the impact of specific scenes. Failure to comprehend deixis may limit our ability to engage emotionally with the characters. Furthermore, deixis contributes to narrative coherence by leading us through transitions and connecting various scenes. Without deixis, the narrative may appear fragmented or disjointed, making it difficult to follow the plot and piece together the events. As a result,

understanding the deictic terms employed in the film is critical to completely comprehending the plot and appreciating its intended meaning.

The phenomenon of deixis has been dealt with by a number of scholars and linguists from various approaches and perspectives in different languages and genres. Many researchers have analyzed deixis in a lot of kinds of texts, such as, speech, newspapers' articles, song lyrics, novels, teachers' talks, students' talks, and other area of language expressions. Syafryadin et al. (2021) investigated the deixis types and reference types in Jakarta Post. They found that all types of dexis were found in Jakarta Post, person, spatial, time, discourse and social: in detail, 300 words of person deixis, 140 Spatial deixis, 90 time deixis, 30 social and 15 discouse deixis. The dominant type was person deixis. They also found that the dominant reference was anaphoric reference, and concluded that most of authors in Jakarta Post used person deixis and anaphoric reference to give clear information about the written text. Vrika et al. (2022) found some kinds of the deictic expression in the "Advantage #4: Meaningful engagement" text in The Jakarta Post E-PAPER. The person deixis that was involved were "us, Indonesian students, it, the students, your malnourished children, you, themselves, them". The time deixis was "in 1998, last year, evening". The place deixis that was involved in this text were "there, high school, the school, university, Trisakti University, Hotel Indonesia traffic circle, and the Presidential Palace". Discourse deixis that was involved in this text was "there, it, and that", and also the social deixis that was involved was "the president".

Saputra et al. (2022) found three types of personal deixis in the film *Transformer: Revenge of the Fallen* based on the utterances performed by the characters; they were first-person deixis, I, we, us, me, our, I'm, second-person deixis, you, your, third-person deixis, they, it, he, them. Alkhawaldeh (2022) found that those three deictic types were relatively common in the language of the respective corpus with the personal type being predominant; deictically pointing to different referents whose interpretation was sensitive to the context in which they occurred. As an affectively powerful tool in the corpus, the preachers utilized deixis to serve a wide variety of functions on the discourse and pragmatic levels. In the corpus, deictic expressions worked as a discourse strategy to persuade the listeners by drawing their attention and engaging them in the message of the sermon and to signal and organize the flow of information in the ongoing discourse. They also served to enhance togetherness, intimacy, and politeness between the preachers and their audience. This study was hoped to present a good basis for further linguistic investigation of deixis in other languages and religions to illuminate how deictics worked in sermonic discourse.

Saffah and Al-Hindawi (2021) tried to present a thorough review of the topic in question from a pragmatic perspective, enhancing its different categories, functions, and shedding some light on its relation to the phenomenon of indexicality. They attempts to bridge the gap in the literature through answering: What were the categories of deixis? What was the role of context in interpreting deixis? And what was the relation between deixis and indexicality? Their survey eventually revealed that deixis had to do with the context and the speaker's communicative intention. Hidayati, et al. (2022) discovered deixis and error analysis in student writing. There were kind deixis of stories in narrative text that students wrote like temporal deixis, person deixis, spatial deixis, social deixis, and deixis discourse. For the error analysis there were ommission, addition, misinformation and misordering. Puteri et al. (2022) found that there were 117 deixis terms found in the World Travel Magazine article, divided into five types of deixis found in that article, including 40 terms of personal deixis, 21 terms of time deixis, 1 term of place deixis, 51

terms of discourse deixis and 4 terms of social deixis. Panggabean and Khatimah (2022) found that there were five types of deixis found in the novel *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini, those were: person deixis, place deixis, time deixis, discourse deixis, and social deixis.

The current study intends to analyze the deixis categories in the movie *The Pursuit of Happyness*, with a particular emphasis on personal deixis. It relates to how characters in the movie utilize words to refer to themselves or others. Understanding how characters connect, develop relationships, and transmit meaning through language would be aided by analyzing deixis in the movie. It elucidates the interactions, contextual allusions, and underlying messages transmitted. Deixis analysis also shows complexities in conversation, improves understanding of character motivations, and reveals the director's movie choices. Overall, it increases appreciation and comprehension of the dialogue and characters in the movie. Deixis is vital to research since it can be used to reference and strengthen the readers' understanding of the movie.

3. Research Method

Descriptive qualitative research was utilized as a way to describe the findings of this study as they were discovered without any alteration. Because language studies are classified as social science, this phenomenon typically employs qualitative as an approach to investigate broad issues. As a result, because the data for this study came from the text of a movie that was not statistically examined, the descriptive qualitative design was adopted. The data were the written text or movie script of Gabrielle Muccino's movie *The Pursuit of Happyness*, which was first published in 2006 and was acquired via documentary techniques. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. Thematic analysis is a qualitative data analysis that focuses on identifying, analyzing, and interpreting data. In general, thematic analysis consists of six steps. The first step is familiarization, which requires a researcher to be familiar with the data from the script. The second is that coding which is required to identify the deixis in the movie. The third step, producing themes, requires the researcher to select a topic which deals with deixis types. The fourth step, establishing and naming themes, is critical for labeling. The fifth stage, writing up, is critical to complete since it is here that the researcher writes the deixis analysis that was detected and classed in *the Pursuit of Happyness* movie (Heigham and Crocker, 2009).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

In *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie directed by Gabrielle Muccino, there were 898 person deixis found. These data were analyzed using Levinson's theory (1983) as shown in the following.

Types of Person Deixis		Pronouns	Frequency
First Person	Singular	I	159
		my	13
		me	8
		myself	2
	Plural	we	86
		our	16
		us	6

Second Person	Singular	you	322
		your	50
		yourself	4
Third Person	Singular	he	14
		him	25
		his	59
		she	6
		her	22
		it	73
	Plural	they	11
		them	21
		themselves	1
Total		898	

Table 1. Person Deixis Occurrence in *The Pursuit of Happyness* Movie

Those data can be analyzed as follows:

a. First Person Singular: *I, my*

Christopher: *"I think I should make a list!"*

Mr. Gardner: *What do you mean?*

Mr. Gardner: *For my birthday gifts?*

Christopher: *Yeah.*

In the short dialogue, there is a pronoun *I* which is a deictic term as it depends on the context and refers to the specific individual who is speaking (Christopher). It represents the speaker's personal perspective and involvement in the action being discussed. There is also other pronoun *my* which refers to Gardner's birthday gifts being discussed. Personal deixis in this conversation is used to establish the perspective and ownership of certain actions and objects. The pronouns *I* and *my* contribute to understanding the specific individuals involved and their relation to the discussed topics.

Mr. Charlie: *I got painters coming in.*

Mr. Gardner: *All right, look. I need more time.*

Mr. Charlie: *No*

Mr. Gardner: *"Alright, I will paint it myself."*

The personal deixis in the above conversation is the pronoun *I*, which refers to Mr. Charlie, indicating that he is the one who has painters coming in. The interpretation of *I* depends on the identity of the speaker. In the short conversation, there is also a pronoun *myself* which is a reflexive pronoun and also falls under personal deixis. It emphasizes that the speaker intends to perform the action of painting without external assistance. The inclusion of *myself* highlights the speaker's personal involvement and autonomy in the task.

b. First person plural: *we*

Christopher: *Can we go to the park today, after?*

Mr. Gardner: *How you doing in here, man?*

Mr. Gardner: *Okay.*

Mr. Gardner: *No, I gotta go to Oakland.*

The pronoun *we* is a personal deixis that refers to the speaker who is more than one individual. *We* signifies a group that includes the speaker. The specific referent of *we* depends on the context and the identities of the individuals involved. The personal deixis aspect here is the inclusion of the speaker as part of the group planning to go to the park (based on the context *we* refers to Mr. Gardner and Christopher).

Linda: *Just sell what's in your contract.*

Linda: *Get us out of that business.*

Mr. Gardner: *Linda, that is what I am trying to do.*

The pronoun *us* is a personal deixis term that refers to the speaker and one or more individuals. *Us* signifies a group that includes the speaker. The specific referents of *us* based on the context and the identities of the individuals involved are Linda's family. The personal deixis aspect here is the inclusion of the speaker and others in the request to be taken out of the business. In this sentence, the deixis revolves around the speaker's perspective, his desire for action (get), the inclusion of himself and others (*us*), and the specific business they want to be removed from (*that business*). By analyzing these deictic terms, it gains insights into Linda's intention and her request for Mr. Gardner to take action to remove them from a specific business.

c. Second Person singular

Mr. Johnson: *"You have done a fantastic job. Chris, I mean that. Take care of yourself."*

Mr. Gardner: *Yes, Mr. Johnson.*

In the conversation, the pronoun *you* is a personal deixis that refers to the person being addressed. In this case, it refers to Chris, the person being spoken to. It reflects the speaker's direct address to the individual. The reflexive pronoun *yourself* refers to Chris Gardner, the sentence *take care of yourself* is an instruction or advice given to Chris. It signifies the speaker's concern for Chris' well-being and emphasizes the importance of self-care.

In this dialogue, the deixis revolves around the direct address to Chris, the recognition of his accomplishments, the evaluation of his work, the use of his name, and the concern for his well-being. By analyzing these deictic terms, it gains insights into the speaker's appreciation of Chris's work and their sincere advice for his self-care.

Christopher: *Hoss Cartwright on Bonanza*

Mr. Gardner: *"How do you know Bonanza."*

Christopher: *"We watch it at Mrs. Chu's."*

Mr. Gardner: *You watch Bonanza at daycare?*

Christopher: *Yeah.*

The word *you* is a personal deixis term that refers to Christopher (the person being addressed). In this context, it reflects the speaker's direct address to the individual (Christopher). The use of *you* creates a direct and specific reference to the person being spoken to, indicating that the speaker (Mr. Gardner) is addressing him directly. The pronoun concerned establishes a personal connection between the speaker and the person being addressed. It serves as a linguistic tool to establish a communicative relationship between the speaker and the addressee. In the sentence *You watch Bonanza at daycare?* the personal

deixis *you* is used in the sentence to refer to the person being addressed. It indicates the person who is speaking to or referring to. The interpretation of *you* depends on the context of the conversation and the identity of the person being addressed (Christopher).

d. Third person singular

Mr. Twistle: *Hello? Chris?*

Mr. Gardner: *Go ahead. I have one.*

Mr. Twistle: *Write this number down so you can call my secretary, Janice.*

Jay Twistle: *"She can give you all the specifics."*

She, in the conversation above, is a personal deixis that refers to Janice, a specific female. It indicates that there is someone talked in the conversation who possesses the information being referred to. The personal deixis aspect here is the speaker's reference to a particular person who has the knowledge. In this dialogue, the deixis revolves around the speaker's reference to a specific person (*she*) who has the information about the phone number based on movie, the ability of that person to provide the specifics, the direct address to the addressee (*you*/Mr. Gardner), and the emphasis on detailed information.

Mr. Gardner: *"It is not a time machine."*

Christopher: *The guy said it was a time machine.*

Mr. Gardner: *It's not a time machine. He was wrong.*

Christopher: *What guy?*

The pronoun *it*, in the sentence *It is not a time machine*, is a personal deixis that refers to an object or thing. In this context, *it* refers to something that has been mentioned before or is known within the conversation. The deixis aspect here is the speaker's reference to a specific object, *a time machine*. The noun phrase *a time machine* refers to a device or mechanism that allows for time travel. It represents a specific concept or idea known within the context of the movie.

In *The guy said it was a time machine*, the pronoun *it* is a personal deixis that refers to an object or thing. In this context, *it* refers to something that has been mentioned or is known within the conversation. The deixis aspect here is the speaker's reference to a 'portable bone scanner'. In the recent paragraph, the demonstrative deixis with *it* is used to refer to a previously mentioned or understood object or concept, implying that the referred thing is not a time machine (it is portable bone scanner).

The personal deixis with *he* is used to refer to a specific person who was wrong in some aspect that talking about 'bone scanner is a time machine'. The understanding of these deixis relies on the context of the conversation and the shared knowledge between the speaker and the listener.

e. Third person plural

Mr. Gardner: *But I need it back for Monday.*

Stockbroker: *Feed the meter*

Mr. Gardner: *They all looked so damn happy to me.*

Mr. Gardner: *Why couldn't I look like that?*

In the statement 'They all looked so damn happy to me', there is a third personal plural deixis. The third personal plural deixis that is found in the text above is *They*. This type

of personal deixis refers to the ‘Stockbroker’ that is not in the text of sentences above but that was found in context of the movie *The Pursuit of Happyness*.

4.2 Discussion

The investigation of person deixis in the movie *The Pursuit of Happyness* directed by Gabrielle Muccino revealed 898 personal pronouns which can be classified as several types of deixis, including first person singular: *I, my, me, myself*, and first-person plural: *we, our, us*, second person singular: *you, your, yourself*, and third person singular: *he, him, his, she, her, it*, and third-person plural: *they, them, themselves*. The first-person singular deixis occurred 182 times, the first-person plural deixis occurred 108 times, the second person singular deixis occurred 378 times, the third person singular deixis occurred 199 times, and the third person plural deixis occurred 33 times. The frequency of presence of person deixis revealed that the second-person singular and third-person singular were the most prevalent, respectively. This means that the person deixis that is most dominantly used in the film has a point of view that refers to a person or group of people addressed by the writer or speaker. The second-person deixis refers to a person or people that a speaker or writer is addressing. A second-person pronoun does not refer to the speaker/writer themselves nor does it refer to other people that a speaker/writer is not directly addressing. The person deixis concerned are commonly used to give another person or people commands, directions, or advice. Usually, someone is talking to/texting/calling/ emailing a person directly when he/she does any of these things.

The study provides more detailed information compared to several previous studies, which did not provide information on the frequency of deixis occurrences, such as Ramasari (2020) who found that the person pronoun deixis was most frequently used (existed); second person deixis, third person deixis, possessive personal plural person deixis, and reflective personal person deixis were used as references to participant roles of referents to describe the speaker, the addressee and referent that are neither speaker nor addressee in written forms. However, this research does not provide information about the frequency of use; likewise, Vrika et al. (2022) who found that the person deixis that was involved were *us, Indonesian students, it, the students, your malnourished children, you, themselves, them*. On other hand Saputra (2022) provided more information about person deixis, finding 40 data indicated as person deixis form. There were three forms of person deixis that were found in the film entitled *Transformer: Revenge of The Fallen*. First was first-person deixis. The data that showed first-person deixis in this movie were *I, we, me, I'm, our, us*. Second, second-person deixis form which was *you, your*. Lastly, the third-person deixis form included *it, he, they, them*. The details of person deixis found in previous research are much lesser than the number found in this study, which explains the frequency details of each type of person deixis existed.

The study adds to our understanding of deixis in movie discourse and provides insights on the pragmatic use of language in the movie *The Pursuit of Happiness*. It expands understanding of how deixis works in a specific cinematic setting and emphasizes the importance of personal deixis in building effective communication. The findings have the potential to be useful for linguistic analysis, film studies, and contributing to a broader understanding of deixis in many types of media.

5. Conclusion

After carrying out analysis and discussion, the researcher conclude that all types of person deixis in the form of first-person pronouns, second-person pronouns and third-person pronouns are found in the movie *The Pursuit of Happyness* directed by Gabrielle Muccino. However, there is one type that is not found, namely the second person plural *you*. First person deixis is used to express the perspective and involvement of the speaker in a conversation. It involves the use of pronouns like *I, me, my, myself, we, our, and us* which directly refer to the speaker or a group that includes the speaker. Second person deixis is a linguistic phenomenon that involves using language to directly address the listener or a group of listeners in a conversation. It employs pronouns such as *you, your, and yourself* to establish a direct and intimate connection between the speaker and the listener. Third person deixis is a linguistic phenomenon in which language refers to someone or something indirectly, as if they are not directly involved in the conversation. It uses pronouns such as *he, him, his, she, her, it, they, them* and *themselves*, to talk about individuals or objects without addressing them directly.

References

- Alkhawaldeh, A. A. (2022) Deixis in english islamic friday sermons: A pragma-discourse analysis. *Studies in English Language and Education*. 9(1) 418-437, 2022. <https://jurnal.usk.ac.id/SiELE/article/view/21415>
- Heigham, J & Crocker. (2009). *Qualitative Research in Applied Linguistics*. London: Palgrave
- Hidayati, I., Sulistyaningsih, S. & Syakur, A. (2022) The use of deixis in the students' writing narrative texts. *Budapest International Research and Critics Institute-Journal (BIRCI-Journal)*. 5(1) 2022. <https://doi.org/10.33258/birci.v5i1.4240>
- Levinson, Steven C. (1983). *Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Panggabean, W., & Khatimah, K. (2022). Deixis in the novel the kite runner by khaled hosseini. *Acitya: Journal of Teaching and Education*, 4(1), 80-87. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30650/ajte.v4i1.3194>
- Puteri, N. P. Y. A., Soethama, P. L., & Putra, I. K. S. (2022). The used of deixis in "World Travel Magazine". *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Culture*, 8(3), 104–110. <https://doi.org/10.21744/ijllc.v8n3.2088>
- Ramasari, M. (2020). An analysis of deixis existed on articles at jakarta post. *Journal of Language and Literature*. 8 (2).
- Saffah, D. M. & Al-Hindawi, Hameed, D. F. (2021). Deixis: A pragmatic perspective. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Invention*, 8(06), 6488–6496. <https://doi.org/10.18535/ijsshi/v8i06.03>
- Saputra, I. P. D. A., Udayana, I. N., & Parthama, I. G. N. (2022) Person Deixis in the film transformer: revenge of the fallen. *Stilistika: Journal of Indonesian Language and Literature*. Vol. 02(1) 2022 <https://doi.org/10.24843/STIL.2022.v02.i01.p11>
- Syafryadin, A. et al. (2021). Deixis and reference analysis in jakarta post: A content analysis research. *JEES: Journal of English Educational Study*. Vol. 4(2) 2021 pp.105-111. <https://doi.org/10.31932/jees.v4i2.983>
- Vrika, R., Fauziah, M., & Mudinillah, A. (2022). The use of pragmatics deixis in the e-paper "advantage #4: meaningful engagement". *Jurnal Education and Development*. Vol. 10(2) 2022.
- Yule, G. (1996). *Pragmatics*. New York: Oxford University Press.